

TO: Mr. J. B. Edens, President,
Texas Lumber Manufacturers Association.

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Texas Forest Service

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO THE
BARK BEETLE EPIDEMIC IN SOUTHEAST TEXAS.

By: TLMA Beetle Committee
February 8, 1951.

This Committee has carefully studied activity of the southern pine bark beetle in our Southeast Texas forests and recognises the destruction already wrought to standing pine timber. We regret to report that the infestation continues as of this date with no indication of abatement.

Only a few persons and companies are actively engaged in control measures to arrest the epidemic. The infestation now covers an area from Beaumont to Cleveland, south to Devers and northward to the Batson area and into Polk County.

There were indications in 1949 that the southern pine beetle was increasing in numbers and destroying pine timber beyond normal expectations. By 1950 it was very apparent that the infestation had already reached epidemic proportions and that concerted action was needed to stop the spread as well as to salvage dead timber.

No one knows what natural agencies, whether rainfall, temperature, or predators, will reduce the present beetle population back to normal numbers. Nor does anyone know when such natural control might be expected to occur. Reliable reports by several companies and from the Texas Forest Service indicate that the beetles in the infested area are alive and occur in such a pattern that continued, and possibly greater, destruction should be expected during the year of 1951. This condition exists despite the below normal temperatures experienced during the past few weeks, which many persons thought would destroy the beetles.

There is proof that the spread of the southern pine beetle has been unpredictable and difficult to attack. Such questions as: pattern of spread; intensity of infestation; normal balance of insect population; control methods and costs have not all been answered. Some of the answers regarding costs and methods of control must be obtained through companies actually performing

control work. The fact that behavior of the beetles in the present epidemic has been largely unpredictable and contrary to previous concepts indicates the need for one or more full-time entomologists to make an intensive investigation and study.

The Beetle Committee Recommends That:

1. The Texas Lumber Manufacturers Association encourage its membership to recognize the emergency nature of the situation and further to encourage them to actively participate in beetle control work on their own holdings.
2. The Texas Lumber Manufacturers Association exert every effort to secure active and effective participation by the United States Bureau Of Entomology and Plant Quarantine in further studies of the southern pine beetle in its present outbreak.
3. The Texas Lumber Manufacturers Association cooperate with the Texas Forest Service in an immediate ground survey of the infested area, designed to accurately determine the location and numbers of 1951 brood trees.
4. The Association create a "Beetle Control Fund" to advance the work recommended in paragraphs 2 and 3.
5. The Association select the Cleveland area, comprising some 60,000 acres of beetle infested forest land, and cooperate with the Texas Forest Service in a "drive" to eradicate all brood trees in this area. This "drive" will consist of convincing land owners in the area to remove, and market where possible, the brood trees on their respective holdings, within the next three months if possible. This area will serve as a "guinea pig" to indicate the practicability of carrying out the same program in other areas of infestation. The Cleveland area is recommended as being the best locality for this test because of its relative accessibility, degree of known infestation, diversity of ownership, and the fact that existing natural barriers surround the area causing it to be fairly well isolated from other areas of infestations.

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We recognise that the southern pine beetle is a menace to successful management of our pine timber resources. The damage suffered during the present epidemic is already very great, not only by virtue of the millions of board feet of standing timber killed, but also because of the disruption of logging schedules and loss of future growth on large areas killed. The problems involved in eradication of brood trees are enormous; the cost of locating dead areas and salvaging such timber far exceeds normal logging costs.

We unanimously agree that control measures are needed by all concerned.

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